LABOUR MONTHLY

A Magazine of International Labour

Editor: R. Palme Dutt

Answer to the Hydrogen Bomb

J. D. BERNAL, F.R.S.

The Landlords' Big Raid

PHIL PIRATIN

Engineering Wages Movement

December, 1953

One shilling and sixpence

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LIVING HISTORY

WORKING on the twelfth issue of the year, I notice, revives two little habits among the staff here. One is a tendency to linger over checking the proofs of pages 573-576, where this year's Index appears: 'What a smashing article that was!' 'Which do you think were the best Notes of all?' 'Pity there wasn't room for more on this subject'. The second habit takes the form of a quick glance at the shelving; is there room for the thirty-second year's bound volume? Perhaps one had better just measure. . . ? Here the trouble begins. It seems impossible not to take down some of those earliest volumes, just to glance at the Index then: George Lansbury writing on *Poplar and the Labour Party;* Tom Quelch on *Trades Councils;* W. H. Hutchinson on *The Engineering Lockout;* look, here's Harry Pollitt's first article, on *The Future of the General Council.* Articles on *The Fascisti in Italy,* on *Labour Spies in the U.S.A.;* here's Tom Mann, Gandhi, Barbusse, Lenin, Bernard Shaw among the authors. And, of course, the now famous *Notes of the Month.* I turn to the first Note of January, 1922: 'With the present issue the *Labour Monthly* enters on its second volume; and the opportunity may be taken to glance a little at the work we are trying to do. . . .' It takes a determined effort to resist quoting what the 26-year-old editor said about the aims of the new magazine, and how it had been received in its first six months. Next month, pursuing that same aim, we shall add another to those volumes of Living History, to which a second generation is now contributing. What a wealth of experience of the working-class movement in so critical and varied a period, what a weapon lies here to hand; we have only to use it. Now is the time for old readers to continue their collection, for new readers to begin theirs—to which they will find themselves returning again and again. Before January is out you should have your blue cloth-bound 1953 volume if you send in your 1953 back numbers by December 15, with 10s. 6d. Trade union branch librarians, please note: we know it is difficult for you to withdraw this December number from circulation as early as December 15. Provided you send in your order and payment by that date, we will accept the return of your loose copies as late as January 15. This is a special concession to librarians of all working-class organisations.

The time is coming to send our greetings to old friends—and how many thousands of them there are: I am thinking today especially of six, whose recent letters lie before me. From home and overseas, of very different walks of life, between them they have experience of every continent. All are veterans, reckoning between them an aggregate of over 300 years' service to the labour and progressive movement. One has a record of 50 years on the stage and has also played his part in organising variety artists all over the world. Another is an American fighter for peace and socialism who attended a Trades Union Congress in Britain before any of the staff here were born. She sends 'best regards to all of you who help to make *L.M.* the indispensable magazine it is'. The third is a sheet metal worker who was the leading figure in organising the workers of the bitterest anti-union corporation in the U.S.A. He writes in praise of 'the informative and wonderful articles that appear month by month, both of a national and international quality that are unequalled anywhere'. Of three home readers, two are North-country co-

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Notes of the Month

Communism and the Constitution

'Her Majesty's Government are not going to allow a Communist State to be organised within the British Commonwealth'.

(Oliver Lyttelton, Colonial Secretary, at the Conservative Party Conference at Margate, October 9, 1953.)

'Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to tolerate the setting up of Communist states in the British Commonwealth'.

(Oliver Lyttelton, Colonial Secretary, in the House of Commons, October 22, 1953.)

GUIANA is more than Guiana. It is a test and a barometer for the future of the British Empire, of British politics and of the British labour movement. The above declaration of the Colonial Secretary on behalf of the Tory Government has not yet received the full and careful attention that it deserves. It was not a casual unpremeditated declaration. It was made twice, in speeches delivered in an official capacity, on two important occasions, at the Conservative Party Conference and in the parliamentary debate on

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Guiana, in almost identical words. It thus took on the character of an official declaration of constitutional doctrine, not merely for Guiana, not merely for the subject colonial empire, but for the whole 'British Commonwealth' *i.e.*, including Britain.

Bi-Partisan Doctrine

More. This declaration was accepted without challenge and without repudiation by Mr. Attlee and by Mr. Griffiths as the official front bench spokesmen on behalf of Her Majesty's 'Opposition'. It thus took on the character of an official bi-partisan declaration of constitutional doctrine proclaimed and maintained by the two major governing parties which at present under the existing electoral system monopolise parliament to the exclusion of any voicing of the popular opposition in the country. Carsonism (the right of armed force to overthrow the will of electoral majorities) has always been the unofficial doctrine of Toryism. It has now been elevated to the official and public doctrine of the Tories with the endorsement of their allies, the right-wing Labour leaders. The old monarchical principle of divine right used to be proclaimed in the formula *'J'y suis, j'y reste'*—'Here I am, and here I stay'. This formula is now proclaimed anew on behalf of the existing social order against the challenge of any alternative social and political order—irrespective of the wishes of electoral majorities or the majority of the population. This new proclamation of doctrine by the self-styled adherents of 'democracy' carries important conclusions, not only for the colonial peoples and colonial constitutions, but also for all parts of the Empire, for the Dominions and Britain, for the whole question of democracy and dictatorship, for the future of the Empire, for the future of British politics, and, above all, for the future of the labour movement and socialism.

Atlantic 'Defence'

When the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was established in 1949, its sponsors explained that this 'purely defensive' military coalition for 'collective security', however much its legal compatibility with the very strict ban against regional military coalitions by the United Nations Charter might be disputed, was in practice indispensable in order to protect democratic institutions against the menace of an armed attack and overthrow. The menace of such armed attack and overthrow arose, it was explained, from the sinister designs of the Soviet Union and Communism. At any moment such

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an armed assault by invading forces might take place somewhere in the vast 'free' territories of the Atlantic Powers to overthrow democratic institutions and elected majorities and replace them by a police state. Therefore it was essential that the extensive armed and re-armed forces of the Atlantic Powers should be in perpetual readiness to come into action at a moment's notice in the event of such armed assault on democratic institutions in any spot of the territories of the Atlantic Powers. The instant such armed assault on democratic institutions was let loose, every sword was to spring from its scabbard, or rather, every atom bomb was to come hurtling from its B36 plane.

And Atlantic Aggression

Such was the theory. And now for the practice. On October 9, 1953, Mr. Lyttelton carried out an armed coup against democratic institutions in Guiana. Mr. Lyttelton and his fellow-conspirators sent warships and armed troops to invade Guiana, overthrow by force the elected majority based on universal suffrage, drive out from office Ministers based on the majority of the electorate, destroy the constitution and replace it by an open police state and dictatorship. Here at last was the long-awaited moment for the Atlantic Treaty to come into operation. In the face of this open armed assault on democratic institutions and elected majorities the innocent might believe that the moment had arrived for every signatory of the Atlantic Alliance to spring into action as one man, and for every voluble advocate of the Treaty to cheer on its forces in their valiant task to repel this armed aggression. But did they? Not on your life. Not a sign, not a ripple from any of these loud-mouthed champions of 'democratic rights' against 'armed aggression'. The British Tory Government carried out the armed aggression. The United States Government proclaimed its applause and satisfaction at such a magnificent violation of the Monroe Doctrine and successful invasion of the American Continent by European armed troops. And right-wing Labour leaders leaped forward to denounce the democratic victims of armed aggression, and to boast that they too, had they been in office, would not have hesitated to send armed invading forces.

A Toast Against Aggression

A month later, on the occasion of the thirty-sixth anniversary of the foundation of the Soviet state, an auspicious informal meeting took place of the diplomatic representatives of the five Great Powers

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at the reception held by the Soviet Foreign Minister in Moscow. The British, French, American and Chinese Ambassadors participated with the Soviet Foreign Minister in an atmosphere which was described by the press as friendly and cordial. This gathering, however informal, had its manifest significance for the cause of world peace; for it blew sky-high the elaborately constructed card-castle of ill-intentioned propaganda endeavouring to create the myth that it would be impossible for the representatives of the five leading World Powers to meet in an informal and friendly fashion in order to discuss existing differences and problems and endeavour to reduce international tension. Inspired by the spirit of the occasion, the United States Ambassador, Mr. Bohlen, raised his glass to give a toast 'against aggression' and offered what he felt might be a 'simple formula for peace'. He said, according to the reports in the press:

> There is a simple formula for peace. The country which first crosses the border of another country with armed forces is the guilty country.

Mr. Bohlen Forgot Guiana

The suggested definition of aggression is not without interest, even though the occasion was unsuitable to pursue it. The toast was duly drunk. The United States Ambassador drank the toast, and certainly did not intend to refer to the strategic offensive bases and one and a half million armed men of the American forces extended over far-flung continents thousands of miles from the shores of the United States. The French Ambassador drank the toast, and closed his eyes to the dispatch of armed forces thousands of miles over the seas to bring death and destruction to the people of Vietnam. The British Ambassador drank the toast, and closed his eyes to the dispatch of armed forces thousands of miles across the seas to bring death and destruction to the peoples of Malaya and Kenya. Nobody said 'Guiana'. Mr. Bohlen himself and the British Ambassador probably never even remembered it. And their hosts were certainly too polite to remind them. But the suggested definition of aggression by the United States Ambassador remains worth keeping on the record as a measuring rod to test theory with practice. For it applies with embarrassing accuracy to the case of Guiana.

Caught Red-Handed

The experience of Guiana has a classic clarity in the long record of imperialist aggression against democracy and popular freedom. Therefore it has aroused such a universal response from popular

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opinion and the mass of the rank and file of the labour movement, as powerfully expressed in the enthusiastic demonstrations, under the widest auspices of local trade union and constituency labour organisations, which have acclaimed the representatives of the Guianese people in all the major cities of Britain. In the actually far graver case of the savage war against the Malayan people, now continuing in its sixth year, the atrocity could be partially hidden behind a smokescreen of myths about 'bandits' and 'terrorists' (terms taken over directly from the Japanese fascists to describe the same Malayan patriots) in order to conceal from the British people the true character of the Malayan Liberation Movement which was the honoured ally of the British people in the war against fascism. The unexampled barbarity of the war of extermination against the people of Kenya has been partially hidden behind the smokescreen of propaganda about 'Mau Mau terror' in order to conceal the real imperialist terror. But in the case of Guiana the aggression was open and visible to all. The customary smokescreen of propaganda had not been prepared before the armed coup took place. All the clumsy subsequent efforts of compilation of the White Paper have not been able to repair the gap.

Whose Violence?

Not a single act of violence or disorder or even of a constitutional breach or crisis could be quoted to justify the armed aggression. Not a single murder or violent crime could be played up, in accordance with the customary imperialist technique on these occasions, to present beforehand a picture of 'grave disorder' requiring the dispatch of troops. Every correspondent of every newspaper testified to the complete calm and quiet in Guiana before the troops arrived. 'Unruffled Calm in Georgetown', reported the *Manchester Guardian* on October 7. And next day:

> There appears to be no disturbance in the country at the moment, apart from a strike in the sugar industry affecting three out of fourteen large sugar estates.

Even Mr. Hopkinson, the Minister of State for the Colonies, who was sent to Georgetown after the event in order to search for some justifying evidence after the crime, had to report to the press on his return on October 25: 'The situation is calm'. Then, recalling the purpose of his mission, he hastened to add: 'I think it is fraught with potential dangers'. *'Fraught'. 'Potential'.* Most remarkable factual concreteness of evidence.

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Electoral Verdict

Had the elected Ministers been guilty of some breach of the constitution or some violent challenge to the constitution such as to provoke the dispatch of troops? Limited and hamstrung as that typical colonial 'constitution' was, the Ministers had never so much as attempted to pass outside its framework. They had been elected on a programme so moderate that it would make the programme of the Labour Party appear revolutionary by comparison. Here were no proposals for nationalisation of the foreign-owned monopolies. The programme comprised the most elementary first steps of reform: civil rights, trade union rights; social insurance; workmen's compensation; security of tenure and loans for farmers; educational reform; low rental housing schemes; reduction of the burden of indirect taxation and increase of direct taxation. They were returned with an overwhelming majority, obtaining three-quarters of the elected seats, on a basis of universal suffrage, in 'free elections' with regard to which not even Mr. Attlee could find a point to criticise. The People's Progressive Party obtained fifteen times the vote of the next alternative party (now presented by the imperialists as their blue-eyed boy), and an absolute majority of all the voters. This is a contrast to the present Tory Government in this country, which was elected on a minority vote, and on this basis claims a 'mandate' to turn out Ministers elected by a majority vote.

Constitutional Zealots

After their election they proceeded—and this was certainly a contrast to the usual Bustamente type operating these colonial 'constitutions'—faithfully to carry out their electoral promises and serve the people within the cramping limits of this colonial constitution. During their short six months of office they had carried through or were engaged in carrying through a programme of reforms, of which, however moderate, within those conditions any Ministry could be proud. There was no constitutional crisis. Even the petty temporary deadlock with the Speaker over the timetable of the Labour Relations Bill had been settled peacefully before there was any question of the troops arriving. The very moderate proposals of their party for constitutional reform (extension of the principle of election to all seats in the legislative assembly; abolition of the non-elected Upper House; ending of the Governor's veto; and election of the Speaker by the Assembly) were presented in the law-abiding and constitutional form of a national petition—'Patriotic

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Appeal for Amendments to the Constitution'. In short, in contrast with Mr. Attlee, whose dictum of 1933 may be usefully recalled:

> The important thing is not to do things with the most scrupulous regard to theories of democracy or exact constitutional propriety, but to get on with the job.
>
> (C. R. Attlee in *Problems of a Socialist Government*, 1933.)

Dr. Jagan and Mr. Burnham were the most impeccable zealots of constitutional propriety. And then the blow fell.

Comic Opera 'Red Plot'

Under the circumstances it is not surprising that the original Government statement of October 7, to justify the dispatch of warships and troops, could find nothing better to offer than imaginary pictures of a non-existent future event. The apprehensive Tory spinster could not even display a burglar under the bed. She could only argue that there might be a future burglar under the bed next week or next month or next year, and that the man passing by in the street might turn out to be that potential burglar, and that therefore it would be desirable to bash him on the head now to make sure. There had been, the statement declared, 'intrigues' (magnificent vague word) 'of Communists and their associates, some in Ministerial posts'. From this the conclusion was drawn (italics added):

> *If* these processes were to continue unchecked an attempt *might* be made, by methods which are familiar in some other parts of the world, to set up a Communist-dominated State. This *would* lead to bloodshed.

A truly hypothetical 'Red plot'.

Hypothetical Revolution

On the model of this new offence of 'hypothetical revolution' it would be tempting to draw up the future indictment of the Labour Party when the Tory Party deems the time has come to suppress it. The explanatory White Paper will no doubt declare:

> The Labour Party pretends that it is not a Communist Party, although it accepts money from unions led by Communists, many of its leaders are closely associated with Communists in the industrial field, most of its leaders and its official organ can be quoted as having at one time or another praised Communists and the Communist Party, and most of its leaders are known to have paid visits, often of an official character and on official delegations, including an official delegation of the Labour Party, to Iron Curtain countries (see Appendix A for list of contacts of leaders of the Labour Party with Iron Curtain countries).

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It has further been established that resolutions which the leadership publicly admitted to be 'Communist-inspired' received supporting votes of two to three and a half millions at the most recent annual gatherings of the Trades Union Congress (whose leadership is suspiciously interlocked with that of the Labour Party) and of the Labour Party (see Appendix B for list of such resolutions).

If these processes were to continue unchecked, it is obvious that in the not distant future such open Communist policy might become the official policy of the Labour Party, and that this could lead, on the basis of the warning example of other countries, to an attempt to establish a totalitarian state, which would inevitably lead to bloodshed.

In the interests of law and order, and to prevent bloodshed, it has therefore been found necessary to arrest Mr. Attlee and Mr. Morrison, and to declare the Labour Party a proscribed organisation.

This hypothetical White Paper on the Labour Party could certainly contain a good deal more concrete evidence than the actual Government White Paper on Guiana.

Reichstag Fire Without the Reichstag Fire

Conscious of the glaring inadequacy and failure of the earlier statements to convince anyone, the Government endeavoured to put a little flesh on the naked skeleton in their cupboard with the aid of the White Paper published a few days later. Evidently someone had told them that a hypothetical revolution was a bit too thin and metaphysical to take a trick. Something more picturesque and fiery was needed to startle a public jaded with 'Red plots'. If there were no murders or bloodshed to which to refer, what about a fire? A fire will always make good copy. Ever anxious to oblige, the Government proceeded in the new version to offer, not indeed an actual fire, but a hypothetical fire. The White Paper sought to embellish the previous lame and unconvincing exercise in imagination by adding a fantastic fairy tale, not of an allegation of arson, but of an allegation of a supposed intention to commit arson in the future. The only 'proof' offered for this imaginary intention was the unconfirmed assertions of 'police agents' (perhaps the direct descendants of those who prepared the forged *Pravda* or maintained the most lurid dossier about Ramsey MacDonald), and the fact that petrol sales had gone up. Even Goering first burned the Reichstag before screaming about a 'Red plot'. But Mr. Lyttelton and his fellow conspirators have been so economical in their stage properties that they did not trouble to take the elementary normal precaution of burning the tiniest government building or producing a Van der Lubbe.

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'Serious Blunders'

No wonder every responsible press organ—until the whip was cracked—poured scorn on the entire concoction.

> Thoughtful observers feel that unless the show of force is justified by the subsequent revelation of an imminent plot, it may well alienate public opinion (*The Times*, October 8).

'Serious mistakes' and 'serious blunders' was the verdict of the *Observer* of October 11 on the Government's action in Guiana. *The Times* editorial of October 21, *after* the White Paper, found the 'weakest' part of it the pretence of a 'Communist plot':

> The 'Communist plot' . . . is not exposed in the White Paper with the clarity and completeness that many in this country expected.

Even the ferociously partisan *Economist* of October 24, always gullible to the wildest imagination of sinister Communist designs, had to admit:

> The White Paper has not cleared up many people's doubts.

The *Manchester Guardian* editorial of October 21, after studying the White Paper, roundly asserted:

> The charge of Communism, so much bandied about in the early days of the crisis in Guiana, now seems rather a red herring.

How Myths Are Made

But this of course did not prevent the million-sale 'popular' press screaming in front-page headlines about the 'Red plot' scotched in Guiana. The Government's action, proclaimed the *Daily Express* of October 5, in announcing the dispatch of troops, represented

> the first dramatic step to forestall a Communist plot to seize power in the colony of British Guiana and turn it into a Red Republic.

'Forestall' is good. It was Hitler's favourite word in announcing any aggression. And the lickspittle *Daily Herald* followed up on October 14 with a reference to

> the People's Progressive Party or Communist Party which snatched power at the last election.

'Snatched power'—what a beautiful democratic description of a 51 per cent. majority in an election based on universal suffrage. Let the Labour Party beware of the menace of endeavouring to 'snatch power' by an electoral majority. As we proceed from the contemptuous scepticism of the more responsible press to the wild assertions broadcast in flaming headlines to the millions by the multi-millionaire 'popular' propaganda sheets, we are able to see in the very act how myths are made. No doubt it is hoped that, after all the detail facts are forgotten, the myth of the 'Red plot'

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scotched just in time by firm action in Guiana, will be as unalterably established in the permanent arsenal of anti-Communist propaganda, and instilled into the minds of all young people who grow up later without any memory or knowledge of the facts, as the similar fairy tale of the 'Red plot' in Czechoslovakia in 1948.

British McCarthyism

Thus the Government's invention of a non-existent 'Red plot' in Guiana, in order to justify its use of armed force against democratically elected Ministers pursuing a programme of most moderate democratic reforms, within the tiny limits of a 'constitution' bristling with 'safeguards' and 'reserve powers', has to be buttressed by the false allegation that the People's Progressive Party is a Communist Party; and this patently false allegation has in turn to be buttressed by the familiar McCarthy technique of 'guilt by association'. This is the essence of the White Paper. If an individual has ever visited a country of people's democracy, or participated in a conference in which both Communists and non-Communists are present, this 'proves' by association that he must be a 'notorious Red'. This technique has been made sufficiently familiar by McCarthy in the United States. It has now been sedulously copied by the British Tory Government in the White Paper—and of course dutifully echoed by their allies and partners, the Attlees, Griffiths, Tewsons and Phillips. Indeed the rabid anti-British and anti-Communist *Chicago Tribune* on October 11 triumphantly boasted:

> The British press has said a lot about McCarthyism in this country to the effect that it is wicked of our Congress to try to find out how far the Communists have penetrated our Government. . . .
>
> Now let us have a look at Churchillism. There was an election recently in British Guiana in which a party led by a man called Cheddi Jagan came out on top. . . . The Governor informed London that Jagan is some kind of a Communist, and Mr. Churchill promptly dispatched the 8,000-ton cruiser Superb and two frigates from Jamaica bearing the Fusiliers. . . . The Constitution was suspended and the Ministers were sent packing.
>
> Mr. Churchill may well be right. It is quite possible that Mr. and Mrs. Jagan are Communists, though there is a good deal less certainty about it than our Congressional committees require before they make any pronouncements. The Jagans have been given no opportunity to testify in their own defence. Soldiers from abroad have moved in on the mere presumption that Jagan may be a Communist.
>
> When Senator McCarthy stops asking questions and starts sending the Army around to padlock state capitals, we shall have something in this country resembling Churchillism.

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When the Yahoos of the American witch-hunt can boast of their superior tolerance in contrast to the British models we can measure the depth to which Mr. Lyttelton and Mr. Attlee have dragged the name of Britain.

United States' Finger

But indeed there is reason to surmise that the United States' finger in the events in Guiana may have been considerably more direct than merely to have provided some models of propaganda technique. The *Daily Mail* Georgetown correspondent stated on October 9:

> It is reported here reliably that the anxieties of the U.S. Government played a not inconsiderable part in Britain's decision to send troops to British Guiana. For the Americans have installations built during the war at the Atkinson Airfield near here.

The *New York Herald Tribune* under the heading 'U.S. Interest in British Guiana' reported on October 9:

> The British Guiana affair is of vital importance to the United States, not because of internal events within that colony, but because of its strategic juxtaposition. Venezuela is a synonym for two very important items to the United States' economy—oil and iron ore.

And the *Church Times* reported on October 16:

> Iron ore deposits covering 75 square miles have been discovered in Venezuela near the British Guiana border. On the British Guiana side of the frontier iron ore deposits have also been discovered which may well be a continuation of those in Venezuela. They are claimed to be the biggest in the world.
>
> The frontier between British Guiana and Venezuela, moreover, in the region where the new iron ore deposits have been discovered, is in dispute. This is one reason for the American interest in the deterioration of the situation.

'Forestalling' Or Sell-Out

The rôle of Anglo-American relations in the Guiana situation has still to be more fully clarified by further information. Lyttelton's emphatic denial in parliament of any direct rôle of the U.S. Government ('no representations of any kind were received from the U.S. Government before Her Majesty's Government made their decision') was almost too self-consciously emphatic—especially as it covered only the U.S. Government and not the World Bank or other American interests. It is always possible that the precipitate British dispatch of warships and troops was taken to 'forestall', not a fictitious 'Red plot', but a real threat of American action in the form of reinforcing its already existing base. It is alternatively possible that the drastic action was the outcome of a deal with American

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interests represented by the World Bank. The only coherent statement in the tissue of fairy tales of the Government's declaration of October 9 was the specific announcement:

> The Governor will hasten to carry out the recommendations of the International Bank Report which has been available in the territory for some time and which is to be published shortly. The Bank's recommendation to set up a British Guiana Credit Corporation . . . will be carried out as soon as possible.

The Report of the U.S.-dominated World Bank had been 'available . . . for some time' before the coup (actually since July). If any subsequent negotiations between July and October had contemplated a World Bank credit to Guiana, it is well known, as laid down in Congress resolutions, that no dollar advances are permitted to any country where there are Ministers suspected of Communist sympathies. A condition of any such credit would be an undertaking by the British Government that the Ministers would be removed.

Victims of Power Politics

Such a situation would certainly account for the precipitate suddenness of the British Government's action (the hasty journey of Lyttelton to Balmoral on October 2, and the solemnly 'secret' dispatch of warships under sealed orders), which could most indisputably not be accounted for by anything happening at the moment in the internal situation in Guiana. All the conditions of the P.P.P. election programme and the character of the Ministers had been known for six months without any crisis arising. The Governor had given no hint of warning to the Ministers that any such crisis might arise unless they did or ceased to do this, that or the other. The most arbitrary business firm would not dismiss even an office boy in such a fashion without some preliminary warning. In other words, the decisive impelling force to create the crisis arose from events outside, not inside Guiana. This would also account for the obviously clumsy unpreparedness of the Colonial Office propaganda technique in this case, in contrast to its usual slick methods, since they were caught on the wrong foot and had to concoct the best propaganda explanations they could rake up after the event, instead of preparing the ground beforehand. The warships and troops were sent, not because there was a crisis in Guiana, but because it was feared that the sudden decision, taken for external reasons, and coming like a bolt from the blue to the inhabitants of Guiana, to remove the Ministers, might precipitate a crisis in Guiana. The

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armed forces were sent, not because the P.P.P. Ministers were provoking disorder, but because it was anticipated that the British Government's action might provoke disorder. The leaders of the P.P.P. were not the cause of the crisis, but its object. They were the victims of very much larger considerations of power politics, and especially of Anglo-American politics. Guiana is more than Guiana.

A Lesson in Colonial Constitutions

The wider aspects of the Guiana crisis extend very far. In the first place, this experience provides a classic textbook lesson in the practical operation of the widely publicised colonial 'constitutions'. Especially since the war these fig-leaf 'constitutions' devised to cover the reality of colonial dictatorship have been presented with every device of showmanship as the triumphant expression of a new principle and the beginning of 'self-government'. Tame 'Prime Ministers' and 'Ministers' with dusky skins have been paraded like prize cattle. But the moment that genuine popular representatives have seriously endeavoured to utilise even the meagre possibilities of these 'constitutions' in order to carry through reforms and serve the people, instead of serving as a fig-leaf for imperialism, the axe falls. The constitution is revoked. Imperialism calls off its comedy and reveals its real basis in armed force. The lesson will be duly noted by every colonial freedom movement. The colonial 'constitutions'—which invariably leave final power in the hands of the Governor and the Colonial Office, backed by armed power—are at the best a temporary measure of the relation of forces in the political field, and of the pressure of the national liberation movement. But they are no substitute for freedom.

'My friend Dr. Nkrumah'

Mr. Lyttelton in the parliamentary debate indignantly sought to repudiate the interpretation of his constitutional doctrine as set out by Mr. Bevan in a public meeting preceding the debate:

> You are free to have whatever Government you like as long as it is the kind of Government we like.

He denied that he had any political partisanship between right and left in this matter, and in proof of this he triumphantly claimed how well he was able to get on with Dr. Nkrumah as 'Prime Minister' of the Gold Coast. Unfortunately for his argument, the very next day

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Dr. Nkrumah announced that he was suspending two leading members of his party for the crime of alleged 'Communist' sympathies (actually, support of the World Federation of Trade Unions). It is evident that the broad-mindedness of Mr. Lyttelton is ready to tolerate any political opinion from 'right' to 'left'—provided it is anti-Communist. Or, as *The Times* editorial of October 23 laid down with greater precision, unconsciously paraphrasing Mr. Bevan into terms of constitutional propriety:

> The British Guiana Constitution, like other similar constitutions, presupposes a broad measure of agreement between the representatives of the Crown and the elected representatives of the colony. When such agreement is lacking, the Constitution cannot function.

In other words, the Vichy Ministers have perfect freedom to operate, provided their wishes agree with those of the foreign ruling military power.

Who Rules the British Commonwealth?

But the implications of the Lyttelton Doctrine go further than the colonial empire. The Doctrine was expressly proclaimed to apply to the entire 'British Commonwealth', *i.e.*, equally to the Dominions, whether the older Dominions or the new Asiatic Dominions, and to Britain. By what right did the British Government take upon itself to lay down the law with regard to what may or may not be permitted in the internal politics of every supposedly self-governing Dominion? Were the Governments of the other Dominions consulted, and their agreement obtained, before this new official Doctrine, replacing the Statute of Westminster, was promulgated? The pertinacious Mr. Bevan endeavoured to raise this query, but the Speaker intervened to save Mr. Lyttelton from answering. It may be surmised that Mr. Lyttelton would have triumphantly proclaimed the consultation and agreement of the other Dominion Governments if this had taken place. It is certainly improbable that the Government of India, where the universal enthusiasm for the deposed Guianese Ministers has been most strongly proclaimed, would have consented to endorse the new formula. If this is correct, the conclusion would follow that by the new Lyttelton Doctrine the British Government has publicly taken upon itself the rôle of the ultimate ruler and arbiter of the entire Empire, and of the internal politics of every part of the Empire, including the Dominions previously regarded as self-governing.

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'Commonwealth' or Anti-Communist Coalition

Previously the 'Commonwealth' was presented, at any rate in respect of the 'self-governing Dominions', as a free and untrammelled association of equal partners, with no binding obligations or restrictions on the political evolution of any part. Premier Jawaharlal Nehru, in defending against critics the continued participation of India in the Commonwealth, has repeatedly argued that such participation carries no 'strings', commitments or limitations of any kind whatsoever. The Lyttelton Doctrine now proclaims a reversal of this constitutional theory, in the view of the British Government. If the majority of the population and of the electorate of any part of the Empire should desire to develop in a Communist direction, or in what British Toryism may choose to regard as a Communist direction, 'Her Majesty's Government in Britain' will not 'allow' or 'tolerate' any such development. The previous loudly proclaimed 'voluntary association' becomes a compulsory anti-Communist coalition. Any part of the Commonwealth desiring to travel in a left direction which British Toryism may choose to regard as 'Communist' is faced with undefined sanctions, and is in effect thereby required either to submit to the wishes of the British Government or to secede from the Commonwealth. Once again, as Stalin pointed out nearly 30 years ago, the British Tories are revealed as the grand destroyers of the Empire.

A Threat to Every Dominion

However limited may be the effective powers of enforcement of this new George III doctrine of Mr. Lyttelton and his Tory colleagues, the implicit threat to every Dominion is manifest. In India, for example, the Communist Party emerged at the last general election as the second party in the country and the main alternative to the Congress. Since then the series of State by-elections have revealed the further advance of the Communist Party and its allies of the Democratic Front. During the 18 months since the general election, according to an analysis prepared by the ruling Congress Party, in 114 State by-elections the Communist vote has increased from 7.4 per cent. to 13.2 per cent. In the recent local elections in the United Provinces the Congress obtained 39 municipal presidentships and 430,000 votes; the Democratic Front of the Communist Party and its allies won 26 presidentships and 225,000 votes, and the third party, the Praja-Socialist Party, won 12 presidentships and 97,000 votes. In Travancore in September the united front of the Communist Party and its allies, together with other groups, defeated

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the Congress Government on a vote of confidence by 56 to 51 votes. Supposing a Democratic Government of the Communist Party and its allies were to be formed in Travancore or over the whole of India. What then? The British Government, according to the Lyttelton Doctrine now officially proclaimed, will not 'allow' such a Government to be formed. In other words, British imperialism will regard itself as entitled to use all means within its power, whether of economic pressure or of armed force, against such a Democratic Government representing the will of the people.

A Threat to Britain

The practical possibilities of enforcement in relation to a major Dominion may be in fact limited. It is easier to play the hero, browbeat and bully, invade and shoot down a small and practically unarmed colonial people, the six millions of Malaya, or the five millions of Kenya, or the half million of Guiana, than to attempt to coerce the three hundred and sixty millions of India. But the practical significance of the Tory doctrine proclaimed by Mr. Lyttelton in relation to Britain is more serious and worthy of consideration. Mr. Lyttelton does not limit his doctrine by any consideration of the will of the people or the verdict of the electorate. Electoral majorities mean nothing to him—any more than they do to Mr. Attlee who contemptuously referred in the debate to the Guiana People's Progressive Party as having obtained 'only 51 per cent.' of the votes. If the most overwhelming electoral majority were to vote for a united left government which Mr. Lyttelton and his Tory friends chose to regard as 'Communist' (and the example of Guiana has shown that their definition of 'Communist' is very wide), then Mr. Lyttelton and his Tory friends will not 'allow' or 'tolerate' such a government to come to power, and will regard themselves as entitled to use all means, including armed force, to prevent such a government coming to power or to overthrow it, and, if necessary, to destroy the constitution for this purpose. Loyalty to democracy and electoral verdicts only continues so long as the results conform to the requirements of finance-capital. According to the Lyttelton Doctrine, if 99 per cent. of the electorate were to desire to carry forward the development of Britain in a Communist direction, then the 1 per cent. would be justified in using all means in their power, including armed force, to prevent this. This is Carsonism naked and unashamed, promoted to official Tory doctrine, and not even challenged by the right-wing Labour leadership.

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Warning to Labour

All sections of the Labour Party and of the trade union and co-operative movement will do well to take note of this warning of Tory intentions implicit in the Lyttelton Doctrine. What was done in Greece or Guiana may yet be attempted nearer home in Britain. That is one of the reasons why it is so important to fight the issue of Guiana, as of Greece or Spain, Malaya and Kenya, not only in the name of solidarity with the peoples of those countries, but because what is done there is a direct menace to the British working-class movement. And the most serious warning in the whole situation is the open support given by the right-wing Labour leadership, the Attlees, Morrisons, Griffiths, Tewsons and Phillips, to the assault on democracy. How many lectures have not these worthies delivered to Communists and the left on the great issue of 'democracy versus dictatorship' and the 'menace of the police state'. Guiana has brought the practical test. In the practical test they have revealed themselves against democracy and the verdict of electoral majorities, and on the side of open dictatorship, armed violence to overthrow elected Ministers, and the police state. And if we ask why they have taken this stand, the answer is crystal-clear in their own declarations. It is in the sacred name of 'Anti-Communism'. Because they suspect—merely suspect—some left socialist leaders of Communist sympathies, all considerations of democracy are flung overboard. The sacred cause of 'Anti-Communism' overrides democracy.*

Menace of 'Anti-Communism'

The lesson for every section of the labour movement is plain and inescapable. 'Anti-Communism' is the weapon of the class enemy, of reaction and privilege, against the working-class movement and democracy. Surrender to 'Anti-Communism' is surrender to reaction. It is not only a question of the Communist section of the working-class movement. The attack that begins against the Communists, with purges and bans, if allowed to go through, extends against the whole left (expulsion of Labour Party members for the crime of attending a peace conference, discipline threats against the Bevanites), extends eventually against the whole working-class

*The crudest definition of 'democracy' as Anti-Communism was given by Mr. C. P. Mayhew, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in an address on the United Nations delivered to the young people of the Conference of Education for World Citizenship on December 30, 1948.

'He was asked: "Do you include among the democracies South American dictatorships, South Africa and countries which outlaw any political party or any country which discriminates against their members?"

'Mr. Mayhew: *"When I say a country is a democracy I mean that it is not a Communist country."* ' (*News Chronicle* report, December 31, 1948.)

Alice's Humpty-Dumpty is here surpassed.

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movement and all supporters of democracy. Messrs. Attlee and Phillips are sharpening the knife for their own throats. When Mr. Attlee so easily accepted all the Tory myths of 'totalitarian' bogies and 'Red spectres' against the People's Progressive Party of Guiana, was his memory so short that he had really forgotten the Tory 'Gestapo' scare against the Labour Party, Mr. Laski and Mr. Attlee, in 1945? In the name of 'Anti-Communism' Hitler launched his offensive. Through their blind hatred of the Communists, German Social Democracy refused the united working-class front which could have defeated Hitler. The right-wing trade union leaders and social democrats imagined they could remain safe while the Communists were massacred. But the attack which began with the Communists, soon engulfed also German social democracy and trade unionism and all democratic organisations, and the flames spread over Europe—until the Soviet Union turned the tide. Let the Labour Party beware of treading the path of German social democracy.

Unity for Victory

The indispensable need is the unity of all sections of the working-class movement, Communist and non-Communist alike, in the common struggle against Toryism, for higher standards, for national independence and for peace. The German Communist Party also made tactical errors in the period before Hitler came to power—errors which have been frankly recognised and brought into the fullest light of day. But the Communists have learned the lesson, and strive in the forefront for unity. It is for all sections of the Labour Party, and especially for all on the left who are genuinely striving for a progressive policy, equally to learn the lesson, and to recognise that co-operation of all sections is indispensable for the victory of a progressive policy. The successes won by the co-operation of the Italian Communist Party and Socialist Party in the last election, with the resulting increased votes of both parties and downfall of De Gasperi, have demonstrated the path of co-operation in practice. We are faced with a Tory offensive which extends, not only against the colonial peoples, the peoples of Guiana, Kenya or Malaya, but equally against the British people, the living standards of every household, the wage demands of the workers, and the rents of every tenant. But the battlefront of the working people is forming, as the mighty demonstrations of the engineers and the calls for action have shown, the wage demands of the miners, railwaymen

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and other sections, the mass petition of the co-operative housewives, the resistance of the tenants, and the response to the popular leaders of Guiana. Those demonstrations of hundreds of thousands of engineers in the great industrial centres, without parallel for over a quarter of a century, are the practical expression of unity in action. Great battles are opening out before us. The path of unity is the path of victory.

November 18, 1953. R.P.D.

THE ENGINEERING WAGES MOVEMENT

(from an Engineering Correspondent)

WHEN the Executive representatives of the affiliated unions of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions decided on November 19 to recommend a twenty-four hour withdrawal of labour of engineering and shipbuilding workers, it was a landmark in trade union history. During recent weeks hundreds of thousands of engineering and shipbuilding workers have taken part in the biggest wages movement that Britain has seen for many years. It is a movement which has embraced every industrial centre in the country. The workers in the engineering and shipbuilding industries have demonstrated their support for the 15 per cent. wage claim of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions by varied forms of action, including half-day stoppages on the Clyde, Sheffield, in a number of London factories and elsewhere, shorter token stoppages from half an hour upwards in factories in many parts of the country, processions and demonstrations in many centres, overtime embargoes of varying duration, and hundreds of specially convened meetings in public halls, at factory gates and in trade union branch rooms.

Nothing on the scale of this movement has been seen in the engineering industry since the lockout of 1922, nor in industry generally—so far as the number of participants is concerned—since the General Strike of 1926. It is even more significant that many of the activities which have formed part of the engineering and shipbuilding wages campaign have been undertaken on the initiative of the workers themselves. By displaying this initiative the workers

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have strengthened the position of their national negotiators and shown in unmistakable terms to the employers that the 15 per cent. claim has the energetic support of those on whose behalf it has been submitted.

This active support has been very important in the campaign. It will, in fact, be the key factor in determining the outcome of the claim. It has already been made evident by the course of the negotiations that the employers are not to be shifted in their attitude by the skill and persuasiveness of the negotiators. Nor are they influenced by the justice of the claim. Only pressure from the workers in the industry is likely to change their attitude and bring them to the point where they are prepared to concede a wage increase.

There is much to be learned in this connection from the experience of the last wage claim put forward by the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions. On that occasion also the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation were resolutely opposed in the initial negotiations to granting a wage increase. The unions decided, however, after the negotiating machinery had been exhausted, that from a given date a national ban on overtime and piecework would be imposed. This firm stand by the unions was sufficient to change the situation. Negotiations were re-opened and a wage increase was secured. This time greater pressure will almost certainly be required if a wage increase is to be won. To this extent the task of the unions is harder. On the other hand, their strength is greater, and is more than sufficient, if properly summoned and employed, to win a substantial increase. Hundreds of thousands of workers in the industry have already shown their readiness to take action in support of the claim.

A noteworthy feature of the 15 per cent. campaign has been the efforts of the C.S.E.U. and some of its affiliated unions to keep the workers in the industry informed of the basis of the claim. The facts and figures which have been published on the cost of living, profits and production have revealed to all that the 15 per cent. claim is economically justifiable, and that it is within the capacity of the employers to pay it.

In the minds of many workers emphasis has naturally been placed on the rising cost of living, and on the fact that average weekly earnings for a standard working week without overtime have fallen behind rising prices. At the same time, a growing number of engineering workers have come to appreciate that this is a claim based not only on the cost of living but also on the need for the

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workers to receive a bigger share in the product of their labour. One of the results, therefore, of the publicity of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions has been a growing understanding among thousands of workers of the reality of capitalist exploitation.

The four conferences on the 15 per cent. claim which were held between the C.S.E.U. and the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation between the summer of this year and November 5 served to confirm that the employers have no effective reply to the case put forward by the unions. They were unable to challenge the figures presented by the C.S.E.U. which showed that since 1947 profits, whether gross or net, in the three main sections of the industry, general engineering, electrical goods manufacture and motor cycles and aircraft, had more than doubled. The employers argued instead that these figures, based on returns published in the *Financial Times* and the *Economist,* were representative of only the larger firms in the industry and not necessarily representative of many small firms which were members of the Federation. The C.S.E.U. had no difficulty in pointing out that there was not a scrap of evidence to suggest that the rise in the profits of the small firms was less than that for the large firms. If anything, the opposite might be nearer the truth. It could also have been added that the dominant voice in the rejection of the wage claim was, in any case, that of the large firms in the Federation.

The employers in their reply to the C.S.E.U. argued that the average weekly earnings of the workers in the industry had not fallen behind the rise in the cost of living. They were, however, faced with one very awkward fact. According to their own figures, the average hours worked in the industry over the last five or six years rose by about 2½ per week. Thus the workers have been able to maintain the purchasing power of their weekly earnings only by working longer hours. This, however, is only another way of saying that the *real* wages of the workers have fallen.

On productivity, the employers did not challenge the unions' contention that since 1946 the output per person employed in the engineering and related industries rose by more than 50 per cent. per person employed. They claimed that this was due mainly to improved technique and new and more efficient machinery. They also argued that through the operation of payment by results systems in the industry, increased output meant higher wages for those engaged directly in production.

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Both these points of the employers contain an element of truth, but as anyone with experience in the industry knows, they do not constitute the whole truth. When all the arguments and counter-arguments on the relationship between productivity and earnings have been heard, the fact remains that the employers' profits have risen far more steeply than the wages of the workers. Truth is completely on the side of the C.S.E.U. when it asserts that production has gone up, profits have gone up, prices have gone up, but the *real* wages of the workers have gone down.

In reporting the 15 per cent. wage claim most of the national newspapers have carefully avoided giving any detailed explanation of the C.S.E.U.'s case. They have preferred to be silent on the magnitude of the employers' profits and on the rise in productivity in engineering and shipbuilding. They have no intention of giving their readers the facts on which they can judge for themselves whether the claim is justified. Most national newspapers have also deliberately minimised the significance of the demonstrations which have taken place in support of the 15 per cent. wage claim. These big demonstrations have been briefly reported and have only rarely 'hit the headlines'. If they had taken place in East Berlin instead of London, in Prague instead of Glasgow and in Warsaw instead of Sheffield what a different emphasis the 'news' reporters of the millionaire press would have given them! When, because of the very size of the demonstrations in support of the 15 per cent. wage claim, the national newspapers have been forced to report something about them, they have resorted to another tactic. They have described them as 'communist inspired', and instead of reporting truthfully the claims of the workers they have written luridly about 'red plots' and 'sinister figures' among the union officials and shop stewards. The manner in which the millionaire press has dealt with the 15 per cent. claim is an indication of the fear of big business of the strength of the organised engineering workers. This very fact, however, should give confidence to the unions that if they act with vigour and in unity they can win a substantial wage increase.

The outcome of the 15 per cent. wage claim is of importance not only to engineering and shipbuilding workers but to all sections of the trade union movement. Many trade unionists in other industries recognise that if the employers are able to maintain their rejection of the 15 per cent. claim the attitude of the employers everywhere will harden. A rigid wage freeze will become a reality in British industry. With the further reduction or ending of food subsidies,

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and the increase in rents under the proposed new legislation, all will be set for a serious and rapid fall in the standard of living of millions of people. Nor should the possibility—or, indeed, probability—be overlooked that if the employers were to succeed in imposing a wage freeze in British industry it would not be long afterwards before demands were being made for wage reductions and longer hours of work. It is as true of relations between capital and labour as of other aspects of life and society that things never stand still. A defeat for the unions would enable the employers to seize the initiative and they would exploit it as ruthlessly as they have done in the past.

The engineering workers occupy a key position in Britain. They constitute one in seven of the total labour force of the nation, and the industries in which they are employed have become of increasing importance in the British economy. Corresponding to the growth in importance of the engineering industry has been the growth in influence of the C.S.E.U. It is today Britain's largest single representative organisation of workers engaged in collective bargaining. In this respect its authority exceeds that of the T.U.C. which does not engage in direct negotiations with employers on wages and conditions. Moreover, the C.S.E.U., unlike the T.U.C., is not dominated by right-wing policies and personalities. Among its leaders are persons of widely different viewpoints.

When this article was written the vital meeting of the Executive representatives of the affiliated unions of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering Unions in the middle of November had only just been held. It was already clear, nevertheless, that the struggle around the 15 per cent. wage claim was of special significance not only because of the forms which it was taking, but because its outcome was likely to have a big influence on the attitude of employers in general and the Tory Government in particular towards the claims and living standards of all sections of workers.

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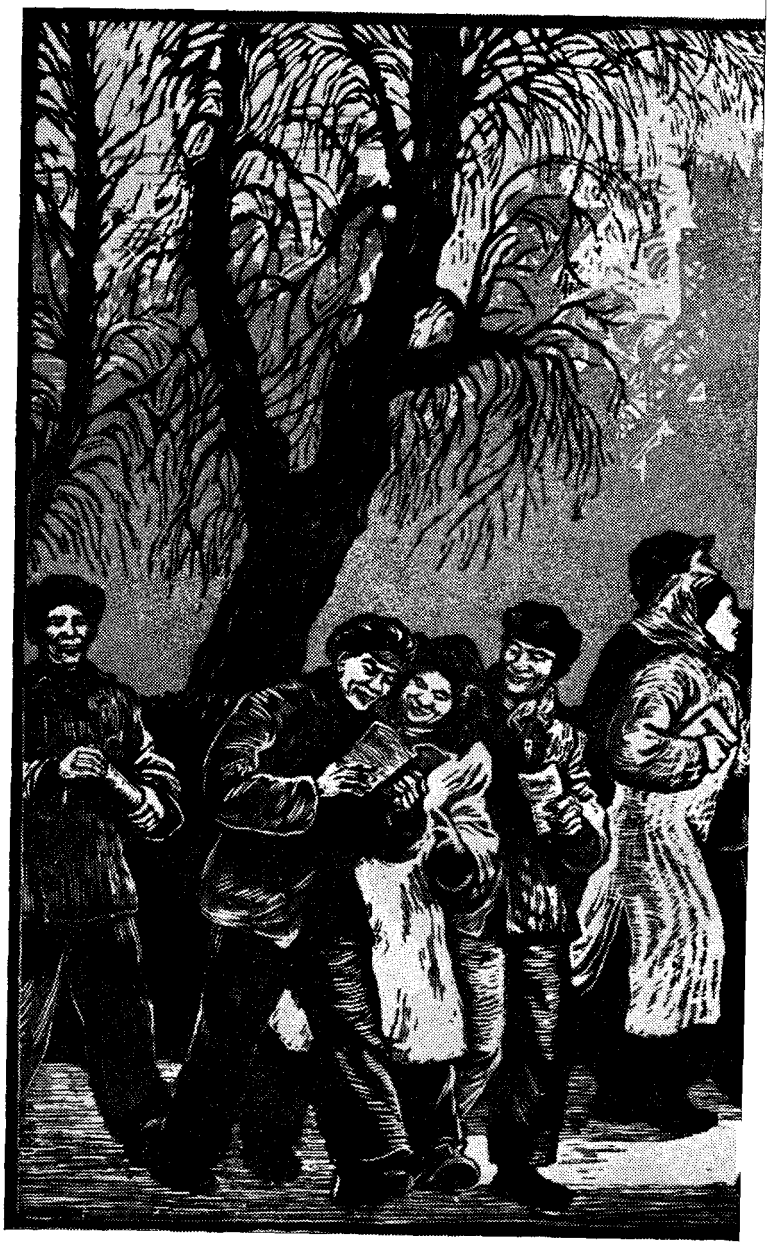

WORKERS GOING TO SPARE-TIME SCHOOL

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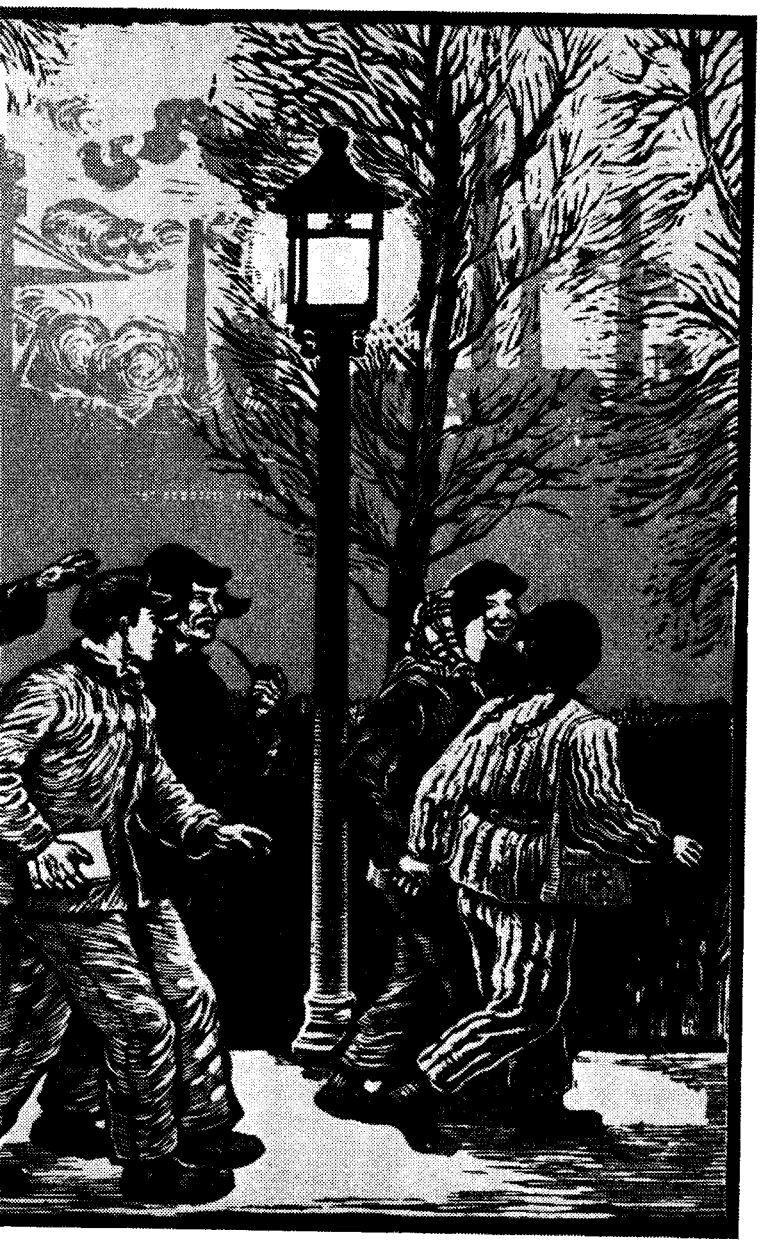

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THE ANSWER TO THE HYDROGEN BOMB

J. D. BERNAL, F.R.S.

IT has taken the hydrogen bomb to break down the blanket of distortion and suppression that has covered the scientific and technical progress of the Soviet Union. In a speech to the American Legion at Indianapolis on October 12, 1953, Mr. Sterling Cole, a member of the House of Representatives and Chairman of the Joint Atomic Energy Committee, discussed the significance of the Soviet explosion of a hydrogen weapon only nine months after the first United States test at Eniwetok. He expressed himself most disturbed over the evidence of Russian progress and refused to minimise it.

> So let us acknowledge the fact plainly: we still seem to underestimate the Soviets—just as in 1949 we were caught by surprise by Stalin's first atomic bomb. . . . yet we shall only delude ourselves if we conclude that the Soviet achievements have been due exclusively, or even primarily, to the revelations of traitors. An atomic programme such as the Soviets had in being represents a tremendous undertaking. On behalf of its atomic effort the Kremlin has mobilised the talents of the ablest scientists, engineers and administrators in the Soviet Union. There are more people working in the Russian atomic programme than we now have in ours. Primarily, in other words, Moscow has mastered the intricacies of atomic and hydrogen energy so quickly because Soviet scientists and technicians are very good. . . . I say most solemnly: If our own hydrogen effort falters, as it must not and need not, the Soviet have it in their capacity to outstrip us and outstrip us decisively—within a relatively short period of time.—(*The Times*, October 13, 1953.)

This cry of alarm from American big business is well founded, but it is not one that need distress anyone else. What is horrifying is the insane determination of the rulers of America in the face of such knowledge to rush blindly on with accelerated productions of weapons, one of which would destroy the whole of London, and not to seek agreement on their abolition offered time and again by the Soviet Union.

The shock of the announcement of the Soviet hydrogen explosion may have at least one good effect in drawing attention to a development in the Soviet Union which is much more important than any

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weapon. That is the degree of success already achieved there in bringing out and using the resources of the intelligence of the people through the teaching and application of science. The great, initial technical start that world capitalism, and particularly American capitalism, had over Russia is being rapidly wiped out and that despite the tragic losses of three wars. This is something that can only be done in a socialist country and will bring home, increasingly as the years go on, the practical and intellectual superiority of the socialist mode of production. In a modern, industrial state, high productivity is not a matter of working harder and accepting wage freezes; it depends on the rapid turnover of the results of scientific research into new tools and instruments. It is a matter of doing and making things better, faster and with less materials. For it is not the countries where wages are lowest that have the lowest cost. Quite the contrary. There is nothing so expensive as poverty, ill-health and ignorance.

Now, to achieve technical pre-eminence requires a supply of trained scientists and engineers on a scale far greater than the quarter of one per cent. of the labour force that prevails in this country, or even of the one per cent. in the United States. It also requires workers able to appreciate, to use and to initiate the applications of science to their own jobs. For all the talk in productivity team reports, the latter conditions can never be fully met under capitalism. Here the worker is not put in a position to understand the scientific basis of his work, the rewards for any improvement he makes in it are derisory and more often than not such improvements will, if accepted, only worsen his conditions of work and chance of employment.

On both these counts a socialist economy has an incontestable advantage. Under socialism higher education is no carefully guarded privilege for an élite: there is no need for guaranteeing the education of the rich through public schools and providing a second-class education for just enough of the poor not to challenge their authority. At the same time the workers have every opportunity and incentive to take an active part in the improvement of production.

These advantages are not just theoretical deductions, they are actually being reaped today in the Soviet Union where the educational system is now turning out an ever-increasing stream of scientifically and technically trained young men and women. Because of the time it takes to train teachers and students, it is only in the

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last few years that we are beginning to see the full fruits of the plan of higher technical and scientific education, but the results are plain enough.

TABLE

Students of science and technology including medicine and agriculture at institutes of higher education.

	U.K.	*% of age*	*U.S.A.*	*% of age*	*U.S.S.R.*	*% of age*
	Number	*group*	*Number*	*group*	*Number*	*group*
1938	28,000	1.0	360,000	3.7	390,000	3.2
1947	43,000	1.6	650,000	7.4	710,000	4.7
1952	49,000	1.9	560,000	6.4	960,000	6.2

These figures show plainly enough how for the last 15 years the Soviet scientific and technical effort has surpassed our own proportionally and absolutely and how proportionally it is now passing the United States as well.

This evident fact is just beginning to be noticed in the United States. In *Chemical and Engineering News* for June 22, 1953, we find:—

> Soviet Russia is gaining rapidly on the United States in turning out scientists and engineers; output of Russian technical schools is an estimated 35,000 a year compared with United States average of 25,000. Figures given at a recent meeting in Washington of the Committee on Human Resources show the Russian total to be 400,000, United States 650,000.

The figures are not directly comparable with those in the table as these contain doctors and agriculturalists as well as scientists and engineers. Nevertheless, whatever figures are taken one thing is evident, Soviet science is growing at an accelerating rate. In 20 years, unless a radical change has taken place in the capitalist educational system, there will be no comparison. The practical result will be not only a vastly higher standard of material and cultural life, but also a secure hope of further progress.

And this is only the part of the story that can be told in figures. Not only in quantity but also in quality, the scientific man and woman power is likely to make itself felt. Already some 6.2 per cent. of the children of the Soviet Union as a whole and a larger proportion in the towns get higher education. This means not just the three-year scramble of the British university or American college, but a solid five-year course, reaching the level of our M.Sc. degree. In the Soviet Union, the universities as such account only for a small proportion, about one-tenth, of the higher education. The

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rest is more specialised; there are medical and agricultural colleges, polytechnics and engineering schools, as well as dramatic and art academies and the conservatoires of music. All, however, have the same long course and all exact the same high standard.

How is it possible for the Soviet Union to find such a mass of varied talent when we are told here that already, with only 3.1 per cent. of the proportion of our young men and only 0.6 per cent. of our young women in higher education, we have scraped the barrel of talent? There are two obvious explanations; firstly, that over there the figures have been practically doubled by admitting women in the same proportions as men, and, secondly, that the disastrous call-up that robs our young students of at least two of the most valuable years of their educational life, does not apply to university or equivalent students there. All they have to do is to take some basic training in the college and go to camp once a year.

The major reason, however, goes deeper than these: it is the acceptance of the fundamental socialist belief that all men and women are educable, and that the building of communism requires, and requires soon, as Stalin said, that everyone should have a higher education. It is difficult to prove that people are ineducable but easy to deprive 96 per cent. of the young men and women of higher education in our own land by a restriction of facilities and the application of intelligence tests. In a socialist country it is possible to prove that at least 10 per cent. are fully educable, by the simple device of giving them the chance of a higher education and using their talents afterwards in the building of the new economy.

The responsibility for education is transferred to society and the teachers, and its success has exploded the theory of inherited mental inferiority of the mass of the population which is the basis of our educational system. I have seen the system working in the Soviet Union, not only in Russia, but in the formerly backward and oppressed Georgia. The University of Tiflis has, for example, a physics course equipped in a way that would rouse the envy of most British physics departments and taught with a thoroughness and enthusiasm that we would find hard to match. And there are 500 men and 350 women taking that five-year course, taught in their own language from Georgian textbooks. This is more men than are studying physics in London University and more than five times the number of women. All this for a country with a population as small as Wales, which 30 years ago was largely illiterate and which had no industry.

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Why so many physicists? They are matched by even larger numbers of engineers, chemists, agriculturalists, doctors—all needed, all with jobs in prospect in building the industries and the agriculture of their own country.

What is being proved in the Soviet Union is that science makes socialism possible and that when society demands and can use science they can always get it. And the lesson holds not for the Soviet Union alone. In China, in the New Democracies, it is the same story. I have seen in Vestprem, in the depths of the Hungarian countryside, a university so new that half the buildings are still in scaffolding, where hundreds of young students, boys and girls fresh from the farms, are learning chemical technology to enable them to run and improve the new coke ovens, oil refineries and aluminium plants that are growing up all round the country.

What has been discovered in the socialist third of the world is the means of releasing and developing the greatest of all natural resources, the unbounded capacity and ingenuity of the human mind. It is this that is beginning to give to their science and technology the lead over capitalist countries that has just been brought home in the field of atomic energy.

For it is not only in education that the new character of socialist science is showing itself, but also in research and development. A new kind of higher scientific organisation has grown up and been tested in practice. It is a vigorous graft on an old stock—the academies of science that were formed in the first flush of bourgeois enthusiasm over science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and had since subsided into highly honorific but quite ineffective societies of the learned. They have now found a new lease of life by being given for the first time in two hundred years something important and practical to do. The Soviet All Union Academy is the heir to the old Academy of Peter the Great and it would delight his mind to see it today. It has become a well-knit group of institutes, concentrated in Moscow and Leningrad, but covering the whole country and employing thirty-two thousand scientists. It does not stand alone but is backed by the smaller academies of twelve Republics of the Union and by the work of the more specialised academies of Agriculture and Medicine.

These academies between them look after the basic science of the Union and are closely linked through the many institutes depending on the different ministries with the industrial and agricultural drive of the country. They are also effectively responsible for post-graduate training to the level of our Ph.D. and D.Sc.

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I had seen something of the work of the academy institutes in the past; indeed, I had followed the progress of some of them for more than 20 years, but I was amazed, in my recent visit, at the rapid progress in scale and quality of the last few years. What I have seen there is scientific research carried out as all good scientists would like it to be, regardless of expense and at the same time without the need for conspicuous extravagance. Much more important is the achievement of a living balance between individual initiative and imagination and group planning. The strategy of science, that can never be fitted into the conflicting requirements of capitalism, is there fully developed. The reports of the academy on science in the successive five-year plans show how year after year the practical appreciation of what science can do has grown.

In the latest report the President of the Academy, Professor Nesmeyanov, sums up the strategy of scientific advance in a socialist society in these few words.

> Primarily, our task is to make a very great improvement in the quality of the work of our scientific institutions and scientists and to increase the productivity of their labour. Scientific staffs must be directed towards solving the main problems of science and defining these main problems exactly and precisely. By bringing science in every way closer to the practice of building communism, to industry and to production, by absorbing the experience of industry and of the innovators in production, we must solve the most important theoretical problems of science.

In the programme he outlines, the emphasis is on the ways in which science can lessen the drudgery of the workers by automatisation and telemechanics, through the use of radiotechnics including ultra short waves and other electronic developments. At the same time there is a full realisation of the need to press forward vigorously on the most promising growing points of science such as the studies of the origin of the earth and of life, which are not seen as academic exercises but as a means of finding and using the resources of our planet.

Among these resources, besides the coal, the oil and the water power, lies the energy of the atomic nucleus which Nesmeyanov describes as a 'vigorous field of growth in science and technology'. It is certain that in the Soviet Union atomic energy is being used not only for power but for chemical transformations in a co-ordinated way unhampered by the restrictions imposed by power companies. It is this prospect indeed that most frightens the makers of atomic weapons.

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Congressman Cole in another speech makes this crystal clear:—

> To my way of thinking nothing would be more devastating to our national prestige than an announcement by the Kremlin that the Soviets had developed peacetime atomic power and were prepared to share that development with their friends and allies.
>
> Such an action by the Kremlin would strike at the very roots of the unity of the free world.

Sad as it is to find the unity of the free world resting on such insecure foundation it is comforting to think that at last even Americans realise that there is something better to do with the atom bomb than to devastate the world. This knowledge as it spreads should give rise to an ever more urgent demand that science should everywhere be turned from the service of war to that of peace.

THE LANDLORDS' BIG RAID

PHIL PIRATIN

THE landlords' campaign for higher rents has registered its first success. The Government has introduced a Housing Repairs and Rents Bill with the intention of operating it by Whitsun. The passing of this Bill would be a victory for the landlords at the expense of the 8½ million families living in rent-controlled houses.

From previous experiences the Tory Government recognised that it would be necessary to cover up its real intention of raising the rents of controlled houses. The ground was, therefore, very carefully prepared. The landlords themselves took a leading part in softening up the opposition by modifying their own arguments for rent increases. Until about two years ago the landlords' publicity centred on their 'rights' to higher rents because prices and wages had risen and because other capitalists were making more profits. This blunt profits increase demand was then shoved into the background and in its place the landlords, supported by the Government and the Tory press, began to win public support for the need to repair their houses, the neglect of which, they claimed, was due to the low rents obtained from the tenants. The landlords even shed crocodile tears for their tenants' plight which they could only ease if they could get more rents to spend on the houses.

Without a doubt, the publicity campaign around this theme has caught on and has even affected Labour circles. Against this back-

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ground and the speeding up of the Girdwood Committee Report the Government now introduces its Housing Repairs and Rents Bill. Lyrically, its popular explanatory pamphlet of the Bill is titled 'Operation Rescue'. This explains how well off the tenants are going to be and how much better the houses will be. The question of rent increases, of course, appears almost incidentally.

Part I of the Bill, dealing with Slum Clearance and with Improvements, is a modified repetition of two existing Laws: the 1933 Rent Restriction Act and the 1949 Landlord and Tenant Act. No fundamental changes are proposed for solving the housing problem. Part I has obviously been brought in as a facade to Part II.

Part II of the Bill contains the sting. The essence of it briefly is: that the landlord may raise the rent of a controlled house if he claims to have spent a specified sum of money during the past period of one or three years. Further, he may continue to receive the increased rent if the house is maintained in good repair. Whatever benefit the tenant might get, the landlord does handsomely. For example, if he states that he has spent £30 in the past year on repairs to a house, whose net rateable value is £20, he may then increase the rent by £20 per year (7s. 8d. per week). Thus, if the landlord is honest and has really spent this sum, he will be repaid within one and a half years, and will then continue to receive a 66 per cent. yearly return on his outlay.

The Government proposals are based on the Girdwood Committee's report that the cost of repairs are three times pre-war. Therefore, the allowance for repairs by means of the Statutory Deduction should now be multiplied three times. Hence, in the example I have used, the previous statutory deduction of £10 is now to be increased to £30. But it is strange that the same Government, when calculating the amount of housing subsidies to be granted to the Local Authorities, estimates an annual expenditure of only £12 per house. Why then should the private landlord receive £30 or even more to do the same job? Does anyone really believe that the private landlord will use this sum for repairs and decorations?

So far we have been taking the case of the honest landlord; how rare this person is. I am perhaps too biased because of my East London experiences to judge. The Bill, however, encourages the dishonest landlord. It places no responsibility on the landlord to prove his initial expenditure to the tenant, except where the tenant takes the landlord to Court to obtain such proof. But very few

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tenants will know their rights or will have the means or the time to pursue them. So such landlords can be expected to serve notices as to rent increases, irrespective of their legal duties.

As regards the maintenance, this too depends on the tenant bringing pressure on the landlord by means of obtaining a Certificate of Dis-repair from the local Town Council. Experience has shown that this process works very feebly. Apart from the initiative which needs to be taken by the tenants, and about which he is very often diffident, the process depends on the availability of sufficient sanitary inspectors to do the job, their alacrity in doing so, the standards to which they work and the political outlook of the majority on the Health or Housing Committee, as to whether they endorse the granting of such a Certificate of Dis-repair. The landlord can then challenge this in Court and in a recent case in a London borough, a landlord was able to prolong the litigation for 18 months, while the tenants continued to live in the most appalling conditions.

Even if the landlord admits his responsibility, there is still no duty on his part to do the repairs. He cannot be sued by the tenant, nor can the tenant with-hold the net rent (*i.e.*, the present rent). *Any sincere Government would put the responsibility on the landlord to prove that he has done the repairs by making him obtain a Certificate of Repair, failing which the tenant pays no rent at all.*

Very little increased repairs are likely to take place as a result of this Bill. Where they do it will only be because they are exceedingly profitable to the landlord. There are, however, over four million houses more than 75 years old, and of these, $2\frac{1}{4}$ million are more than 100 years old. Most of these houses are rent controlled. Due to years of neglect, putting them in good repair would not be a profitable proposition for the landlords. Therefore, the tenants of these houses will certainly obtain no benefit. In such cases the Bill proposes that the Local Authority should take them over at site value and schedule them for slum clearance. Here is a typical example of the operation of the capitalist principle in the field of social services. Once the profitability is removed from a service, it may then be taken over by the Local Authority to be coped with at public expense.

It is estimated that this Bill will grant the landlords an increased rental of £80 million a year. This in turn will have the effect of appreciating the value of the landlords' property by some £1,000 million. The flamboyantly titled 'Operation Rescue' now takes on

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a new meaning: not the rescue of the houses, but the rescue of the landlords. Recently stock exchange shares of property companies rose for the first time in years.

The Bill will receive its second reading at the end of November and will be expected to pass all stages in Parliament by March. It will come into operation four weeks after it becomes law. What will the Labour Party do in the House of Commons? It is my firm opinion that the Tory Government can be brought down on this question alone, apart from the many other issues, such as the wages demands and the cost-of-living protests which are now supported by millions of working people. The Labour Party has given no sign of its intentions, but Labour Party spokesmen have already provided clues to these. There is general opposition to putting more money into the landlords' pockets, at the same time as there is no confidence that the landlords would do the repairs. The alternative suggested by Aneuran Bevan is that the Local Authorities should take over the rent-controlled houses and after making them habitable, increase the rent. Undoubtedly, the tenants would be more likely to have the repairs done if Councils took over, but apart from the vagueness as to how and at what cost the Local Authorities could assume this huge responsibility, the tenants are still expected to bear the burden.

There seems to have grown up in Labour Party circles an acceptance of the need to increase rents as the cost of building, repair and maintenance increases. This is seen by the action of Labour Councils, like Tory Councils, in raising rents of their Council houses. On this assumption, rent-controlled houses coming within the purview of the Council could also be subject to increased rents. The problem, therefore, is even wider than that which now faces the rent-controlled tenants, and focuses attention on the capitalist system of determining rents both by private landlords and by Local Authorites.

So many capitalistic parasites feed on the tenant that even many well-intentioned Labour Councillors give up the battle and succumb to Tory measures for raising rents, such as the Rent Rebate Scheme (otherwise the Means Test), Lodger Tax, etc. There is the landowner, the financier, the big builder, the building merchant, the timber monopolist, cement monopolist, steel monopolist, the brick monopolist, monopolists of all kinds of household equipment. At no time during its six years of office did the Labour Government attempt to tackle this problem. More power has been given to the Local Authorities to build, rather than the private landlords, but the Local Authoriites are still subject to the same obstacles and the

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landowners and bankers and others are just as happy in receiving their parasitic share from the Councils as they would be from private builders and landlords. The solution is well known in Labour circles: nationalisation of the land, the banks, the big building industries, the monopolists.

At some time a stand will have to be made. It is timely now for the Labour Party to think of making this stand. The first thing is that there should be no rent increases on the rent-controlled houses, but that at the same time the repairs should be done. The Housing Repairs and Rents Bill must be opposed and defeated. Alternatively, measures should be introduced to strengthen the powers of the Local Authorities to compel the landlords to repair their houses; to do the repairs should the landlord fail to do so and charge them up to him; and if necessary to take the house over completely at site value.

The 8½ million tenants affected by this Bill and the whole of the Labour movement can take immediate action to bring pressure on their M.P.s in order to secure the defeat of the Bill. Tenants Committees and Associations can be organised to defend themselves against the imposition of this new burden by the Tory Government. A powerful movement of these millions of people can prevent this Bill becoming Law next spring. Such a movement could bring down the Government and help to build a united fighting Labour movement.

FROM THE *LABOUR MONTHLY* OF 25 YEARS AGO

BRITISH TRADE UNIONS

Today in Britain, the trade union movement, despite all its weaknesses and defects, despite its traitorous leaders, still remains the only mass organisation of the British proletariat, still constitutes the organisational channel for the mass struggle against Capitalism, still exercises a tremendous hold over the masses, and is still looked to instinctively by the masses as the weapon in their day-to-day fight.

From *What Next in the Trade Unions?*
by John Mahon, December, 1928.

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WORLD TRADE UNIONS AT VIENNA

T. F. McWHINNIE

THE Third World Trade Union Congress held in Vienna from October 10 to 21 was, in several respects, unprecedented as an international trade union gathering. Its effects will resound throughout the international trade union movement for many years to come. More rank and file members of trade unions of all affiliations took part in the preparations for the Congress, followed its proceedings and eagerly studied its decisions than ever before in connection with an international trade union Congress.

In response to the appeal of the W.F.T.U. issued in April of this year, calling on all trade unions of the world to 'delegate the best among you . . . regardless of their opinions, race, sex, religion or trade union affiliation', thousands of meetings, national, regional, local and on a factory level were held throughout the world to prepare the Vienna Congress and elect delegates. The result was the broadest and most representative world trade union Congress in history composed, not of a comparatively few top-level leaders, but of a large cross-section of the movement at all levels. It was both a Congress of unity and a mass Congress. Yet, apart from a short tendentious summing up in *The Times, Manchester Guardian,* and the *Observer* (based on a fabricated quotation attributed to Guiseppe Di Vittorio, President of the W.F.T.U.), the British newspaper press has almost completely ignored it.

Seven hundred and eighty-four delegates and observers, together with 35 guests, made up the 819 participants who crowded the Vienna Concert House in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and sincere unity. Of that number, 342 came from organisations not affiliated to the W.F.T.U. Yet the *Manchester Guardian* was irresponsible enough to report that not a single non-communist personality was present. Manuel Rivas, general secretary of the Anarchist National Confederation of Labour (C.N.T.) of Spain, was there. So was S. Guruswami, general secretary of the 400,000 strong autonomous All-India Railwaymen's Federation; and Abdul Aziz, president of the unaffiliated Ceylon Workers' Congress. There were also no le than 68 representatives from Western Germany, all from orgar tions *not* affiliated to the W.F.T.U. and representing all po'

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beliefs. There were 54 delegates from Brazil, representing 46 non-affiliated organisations; a widely representative delegation of 31 from the Argentine, and 28 from Mexico. There were representatives of the 750,000 strong S.O.B.R.I. from Indonesia, who applied for affiliation before the Congress ended, administering a sharp rebuff to the A.F.L. which has been wooing them for years; there were representatives of the new United National Centre of Chile, which has no international ties; the united trade union centre of Guatemala was present and also applied for affiliation; and the United Trades Union Congress of India, unaffiliated, had its representatives there, together with 18 delegates from Japan, mainly from organisations not affiliated to the W.F.T.U., and in some cases from I.C.F.T.U. affiliates. In all 88,600,000 trade unionists of all affiliations from 79 countries were represented at Vienna.

Why is it that the Third World Trade Union Congress was such an advance over the Second World Congress of 1949, in which 252 delegates took part from 61 countries?

The reason is not to be sought in better organisation or in greater efforts or publicity. The explanation lies deeper. In 1949 the world trade union movement was immersed in a period of division and the Second World Congress itself was, perhaps inevitably, overshadowed by the split which had taken place only a few months previously. But from the preparations for the Third World Trade Union Congress, and the Congress itself, it can be said with justice that broadly, on a world-wide scale, we are emerging from the period of internecine strife and have entered a period of *united militant action*. It is this basic fact which gave the Congress its character and produced the wide representation, the enthusiastic fraternity and the unanimous, militant will to fight for higher standards, democratic liberties, national independence and peace. All over the world the workers are coming together and moving in unity, regardless of the frantic attempts of the A.F.L. and I.C.F.T.U. leaders to prevent this and to maintain and deepen divisions.

The four years since 1949 have completed the discredit of the Marshall Plan and the vision of the rank and file trade unionist has been clarified. Seldom now do we hear this one-time cure-all for the ills of the world openly trotted out and paraded as an alternative to trade union action, as it once was by the Right-Wing leaders. Their bankrupt policies are more and more apparent and the results of the criminal splits which were engineered, both nationally and internationally, are now being understood by ever-wider sections of

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the trade union movement. The trade union movement in the colonial and semi-colonial countries is growing, maturing and taking up the struggle. These factors, and the lessons learned in the growing united fight of trade unionists everywhere, determined the main theme of the report presented by the General Secretary, Louis Saillant, on the tasks of the trade unions in strengthening united action in the fight for improved living standards and for peace. In dealing with this subject, and at the same time presenting the report of activity of the W.F.T.U., Louis Saillant could justifiably point to the great part played by the incessant activity and propaganda of the organisation in giving rise to the mounting wave of unity which is sweeping through the trade union movements of the world.

And in conformity with the unity policy of the W.F.T.U., once again, in his report, the W.F.T.U. General Secretary offered joint talks on the international level between trade unions of all affiliations, saying:—

> Governments have a meeting once a year at the U.N.; why could the national trade union centres also not meet periodically, without compromising their present international affiliations?

In pursuance of this aim, the Congress issued an open letter to all national and local trade union organisations and to all trade unionists not affiliated to the W.F.T.U. and called on them to 'campaign for international trade union united action and bring to an end the artificial separation which has developed in the past years'.

This question of international contacts was also taken up and emphasised by N. M. Shvernik, President of the All-Union Central Council of Soviet Trade Unions, when he said:—

> The All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions of the U.S.S.R. stands for the re-establishment of close relations with the British Trades Union Congress and, he added, with the trade unions of the Scandinavian countries, Canada, Australia, Western Germany, and Japan.

Here is an issue which British trade unionists must take up seriously and campaign upon.

The way forward in the struggle for economic and social development, national independence and democratic liberties was dealt with in a remarkable report presented by Guiseppe Di Vittorio. In it he outlined the stage of stagnation and regression reached by monopoly capitalism, contrasted it with the enormous progress achieved in science and technique and showed how this situation was affecting not only working-class standards but also the middle classes, small traders and peasants. The report showed how, as a result, democratic rights were coming under severe attack everywhere and how

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the question of national independence was a burning issue not only for the colonial countries but, due to the existence of a 'master imperialism', the U.S.A., for the developed capitalist countries as well.

Against the monopolies' policy of restricted production, stagnation, regression, poverty and ruin Di Vittorio suggested that the trade unions should consider putting forward a truly working-class policy of national economic development, a constructive policy of productive investment, full employment, increasing production and the consuming capacity of the people. He also emphasised that this was not an attempt to patch up or re-organise capitalism but a plan to prevent the law of maximum profit being applied to the full.

In illustrating the practical results which could be achieved through such a policy, Di Vittorio drew upon the experiences of the Italian General Confederation of Labour in its fight for the application of their Plan of Work and showed how such a policy brought down to the level of regions, towns, localities and factories can mobilise large sections of the people around the working class in great mass struggles and win real gains in wages, conditions and employment.

On the question of the defence of trade union rights the Congress was unanimous in deciding that the chief slogan for May Day, 1954, should be the defence of trade union rights, and that the W.F.T.U. should draw up a Charter of Trade Union and Democratic Rights, applicable in the factories and workplaces. This Charter will be campaigned for everywhere and will be presented to Parliaments, M.P.'s, the I.L.O. and the United Nations.

Despite every effort of the imperialist governments to prevent it, one of the most notable features of the Third World Congress was its reflection of the upsurge in the colonial and semi-colonial countries, shown by the number of delegates present from them and by the large part they played in the discussions. The bitter fight against imperialist domination as well as imperialist intrigues within the trade union movement ran through all the speeches. But the main note, both in the opening report on the trade union movement in the colonial countries by Ruslan Vidjajasastra and in the speeches of delegates was one of optimism, of militancy and of divisions being healed through a policy of united action. In this connection the colonial and semi-colonial countries learned many lessons from the recent successful struggles undertaken by trade unions of all affiliations in French West and Equatorial Africa for a labour Code.

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The Congress did not rest at reviewing past experiences in the colonies, but, in its protests against the action of the British Government in British Guiana and against French repression in Tunisia and Morocco and in its call for making December 19 an international day of action to end the war in Viet Nam, showed its determination to manifest in action its support for the struggles of the colonial peoples.

The Third World Congress has clearly marked an important stage in the development of the movement in the colonial countries and has been of tremendous encouragement and value for them. Plans for holding a number of regional conferences in 1954 on specific subjects such as Social Security will undoubtedly result in still greater developments towards unity around a militant policy of demands and national independence, in which struggle the organised working class must be the leading force.

Let no one be deceived on the question of the Third World Congress. Despite the comparative black-out operated by the popular press the enemies of the working class and of the trade union movement have estimated the Congress at its real value. The hysterical tone of the few articles which have appeared in the British press and the ludicrous depths plumbed (solemnly speaking in the same article of 'a popular front of all trade unionists', and a 'new Cominform') is a measure of the fear engendered by the wide-world unity movement in the trade unions. By this test alone the friends of trade union progress and working-class advance have reason to rejoice at the Third World Trade Union Congress.

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Book Reviews

THE ROSENBERGS

Death House Letters of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg. (170 pp. Dobson. *7s. 6d.*)

IT is not possible for any of us to get a real sense of the appalling shock which struck at the heart and soul of Ethel Rosenberg when she was torn away from the husband she so dearly loved and the children she adored. Shut away from life, from all she held dear, her driving thought was the day of liberation and happy re-union with her husband and her children. Occasionally the horror of it all almost overwhelmed her. It seemed so fantastic, tragic and fantastic, that she and her husband should have to undergo such torture of body and mind.

I have just read *Death House Letters of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg,* and in one written on September 29, 1950, there is a cry from out of her bruised and almost broken heart. 'Each morning before rising I fight down a sense of desperation, an ineffably bitter longing to see them (the children, W.G.), an insane impulse to shriek aloud for them and for you'. Again on October 28 she wrote to Julius, 'Think of it, it will be eleven weeks this Friday that I last saw our children. Unbelievable, unthinkable, heartstopping. What have we done to deserve such unhappiness?' And then on November 14 she closes a letter with this tortured cry from her mother's heart, 'Honey, let's go home. I miss you and the kids so dreadfully — what shall I do? Hold me close to you tonight, I'm so lonely. Many, many kisses'.

Lonely, oh so lonely, and her only comfort and relief the letters she writes to Julius and the fine courageous letters he writes to her. April 19, 1951, in a letter to his 'Dearest Ethel', Julius has this striking passage. 'They have imprisoned us, but our hearts and minds can never, except in death, be shackled. We will continue to struggle here, as we have in the past, for peace, freedom and true justice'.

This letter was written from the Death House. The utterly grotesque sham of a trial had taken place and the sentence of death had been imposed. There has been considerable misunderstanding about this trial and what followed. Various appeals were made to high courts including the Supreme Court. All the appeals were refused. The impression created was that the higher courts upheld the decision and approved the conduct of the judge and the court that staged the trial. This is not so. D. N. Pritt has made a studied statement on the evidence, the procedure and the conduct of the judge. He is satisfied that 'the Conviction . . . would have to be set aside on appeal under any procedure which provided for a free review of the sentence by an appellate Court'. But as he points out, there is no provision for such. The appeals which were made were appeals for a review of the evidence and this was what was all the time refused. It was obvious that had a review of the evidence and of the statements of the judge been considered in what is generally called a 'judicial atmosphere', the verdict would have been overturned. Never from first to last were the statements made by Greenglass and his wife, judicially examined. They could never have stood up to such examination. The verdict was given and the sentence imposed. The murder of this young couple had become a part of Wall Street war policy. They were decent - living young Jewish people, but they were

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a menace to the Money Lords, they believed in peace and progress. They represented in this the general body of the Jewish people. An example had to be made. It was expressed in the monstrous repudiation of humanity by Wall Street's tool, Eisenhower. No mercy for the Jews who fight for Peace and Progress. That is the message of the trial, the sentence, the refusal of the judges of the supreme court to review the trial and the conduct of the judge in the lower court, their refusal to consider new evidence, including a retraction by Greenglass, and the brutal rejection of the appeal for clemency on the part of Eisenhower.

Read these *Death House Letters* and see how this gentle, young Jewish woman, gradually comes to realise the monstrous character of the forces that are arrayed against her and her husband. Read these and see how she begins to gather strength and build up courage that makes her unconquerable and arouses in her husband a passionate admiration. His family works day and night on their behalf. Her family do nothing. They are, plainly, terrified. Ethel's mother pays her a visit and tries to persuade her to admit guilt and thereby save her life. Following the visit Ethel wrote to her lawyer and opened with this: 'Dear Manny—This is to let you know that my mother was here on Monday. The following transpired, which will interest you. I am still in a state of stupefaction over its bold - faced immorality'. Read the rest for yourself. Read their letters about the children, their letters to one another and to their lawyer. Read these letters and like me you will want to cry aloud against the infamy that sent these two wonderful young people to such a death. Or if there should be the faintest doubt in your mind, read over and over again, the heart-throbbing poem, 'If we die', written by Ethel to her two bonnie boys. I will quote the last verse:—

Work and build, my sons, and build
A monument to love and joy,
To human worth, to faith we kept
for you, my sons, for you.

Yes, they kept faith, for their sons; yes and for humanity. I close the book that contains their letters—a rich legacy to you, to me, to all mankind, feeling truly humble as I think of these great souls, who endured so much with such unwavering courage.

WILLIAM GALLACHER.

A RUMANIAN EPIC

Mitrea Cocor, by Mihail Sadoveanu. (178 pp. Fore Publications, 7*s.* 6*d.*).

SADOVEANU, at seventy, is the doyen of Rumanian writers. His grave and dignified presence and occasional smile of infinite charm is known to everyone who has attended conferences of the peace movement. His novel *Mitrea Cocor* has not only received a peace prize: it constitutes for the Rumanian people an epic embodying their transformation to a new life. Mitrea is a peasant boy, early orphaned by hard fate, prey to the injustice and exploitation not only of the boyar but of the kulak corrupted by the hard shape of feudal society—a kulak personalised in this case by his own brother. The novel tells of his enlightenment through revolutionary contacts in the army, his experiences when it invades the Soviet Union and he is taken prisoner, and his return to claim his bride coincides with the fresh wind that blows cobwebs from the countryside as Rumania steps onto the threshold of liberation. The heroic quality of Mitrea, the human being preserved

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within the peasant in face of every humiliation and physical hardship, he is yet obliged to endure and too ignorant to be able to reject, is symbolised in his humour and irony of speech and habit even as a boy so infuriating to the tyrant, of 'looking sidelong' at his oppressor.

The novel is extraordinarily simple, extraordinarily vivid. It is only through such imaginative and realistic works of literature, or indeed other fields of art, embodying, as this does, the whole destiny of a people in little, that we English townspeople, so distant in history or geography from the utter defencelessness and near-beast status of feudal man, now relegated, so far as we are concerned, to our own colonies, can glimpse the fervent reality of the meaning of liberation to the Eastern peoples, and reduce to its right proportions the pigmy and drooling of the newspaper correspondents and snooty historians who whine over the woes of displaced persons and discommoded intellectuals, or conveniently burke the fact that such, with their forbears, contentedly battened for generations on the toil and misery and denial of any humanity but form to the 'lower-orders-so-naturally-ordained-by-God!' This past, thanks be, is past. Here it lives again, and the days that brought it to an end.

The translation, though often extremely crude, does at least preserve the epic simplicity of style and treatment. The proof-reading, since the book is printed in Holland, should have been much more careful.

IVOR MONTAGU.

Shorter Notice

The Truman Era, by I. F. Stone. (226 pp. Turnstile Press, 12*s.* 6*d.*).

THIS is a collection of articles written by Mr. Stone in *P.M.*, the *New York Star*, and the *Daily Compass* from 1945 to 1952. The articles are good, they contain prophecies, often several years ahead, of the evil results of Truman policy which everyone now knows to have been inevitable; but only a few of us knew at the time so clearly as Mr. Stone. And he had the opportunity and the courage to tell the 'free world' how it was committing suicide. (And, of course, it was 'free' to drive him out of general journalism, so that he now can only tell them what they are doing through his private 'I. F. Stone's Weekly'.)

D.N.P.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

BOOKS

Your Children's Future, by Max Morris. Lawrence & Wishart. 104 pp. 5s.
Voices in the Storm, by Walter Kaufmann. Joseph Waters, Melbourne. 306 pp. 12s. 6d. (paper); 18s. 9d. (cloth).
The Origins of Christianity, by Archibald Robertson. Lawrence & Wishart. 216 pp. 21s.
The Dove and the Sickle, by Harold Watkins. Fore Publications. 126 pp. 3s. 6d.
Aristophanes, by Doros Alastos. Zeno. 146 pp. 10s. 6d.
Rising Tide, by Jack Lindsay. Bodley Head. 272 pp. 12s. 6d.
Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School, by Brian Simon. Lawrence & Wishart. 112 pp. 6s.
Burning Valley, by Philip Bonosky. Masses & Mainstream. 288 pp. $2.75.
Ethiopia and Eritrea, by E. S. and R. H. P. Pankhurst. Lalibela House. 360 pp. 18s.

PAMPHLETS

British Students in the U.S.S.R. Student Labour Federation. 30 pp. 6d.
The United Nations Need China, by Derek Bryan. Britain-China Friendship Association. 12 pp. 4d.
Rents. Labour Research Department. 16 pp. 6d.

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operators whose annual birthday present to their son is a *L.M.* subscription ('and what better present can we give him', comments his mother). The sixth is a Scottish pioneer fighter for women's rights, for peace and for socialism. She describes how she was brought up on the Bible and quotes the text: 'Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free'; today she believes that in a different sense; we have but to show the working people of the world the truth, and they will set themselves free. Our thanks for your wisdom and warm greetings to you all, old friends.

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